

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6347
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UN, ICJ, LI

SUBJECT: ICJ ELECTIONS - LIBERIAN CANDIDATE ROCHEFORTE L. WEEKS

GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR KEARNEY

REF: (A) USUN 3269; (B) MONROVIA 3925 (NOTAL)

1. OTHER POSSIBLE CANDIDATES FOR AFRICAN SEAT ON ICJ ARE UNKNOWN TO EMBASSY. IT IS THEREFORE UNABLE TO EVALUATE POSSIBLE COMPETING FOREIGN POLICY INTERESTS THAT MIGHT EMERGE IF CANDIDATES ARE NOMINATED BY OTHER AFRICAN NATIONS(S). EMBASSY WISHES TO POINT OUT, HOWEVER, THAT LIBERIANS WILL NOT UNDERSTAND IF USG DOES NOT COMMIT ITSELF TO SUPPORT OF LIBERIAN CANDIDACY. IF, FOR EXAMPLE, WE TAKE A NEUTRAL STANCE, AND HOLD OUR OWN COUNSEL UNTIL AFRICANS THEMSELVES COME UP WITH A CONSENSUS, LIBERIANS WILL FEEL THAT LIBERIA, WHICH THEY OFTEN SAY AND SINCERELY BELIEVE IS US'S BEST FRIEND IN AFRICA, HAS BEEN LET DOWN AGAIN. THEY WILL SEE WEEKS'S CANDIDACY AS OF INFINITESIMAL SIGNIFICANCE TO USG INTERESTS IN TERMS OF WHO SITS ON THE COURT BUT AS TOUCHSTONE OF US-LIBERIAN RELATIONSHIP.

2. IN THIS ICJ CANDIDACY CASE, AS IN THE IMCO COUNCIL MATTER, THERE IS YET ANOTHER POSSIBILITY THAT US, BY FAILING TO RESPOND TO GOL REQUEST FOR HELP, WILL ONLY VALIDATE LIBERIAN
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FEELINGS THAT FRIENDSHIP FOR US BRINGS LITTLE IN RETURN.

EMBASSY DOES NOT ARGUE THAT US MUST IN EVERY CASE AGREE TO SUPPORT LIBERIAN CANDIDACIES; BUT NEITHER CAN WE ALWAYS DECLINE OR HOLD OFF UNTIL LAST MINUTE (WHEN US SUPPORT MAY APPEAR MERELY AS GETTING ON A BANDWAGON IN CASES OF GOL SUCCESS AND AS TOO LITTLE-TOON LATE IN CASES OF GOL FAILURE). IF OUR RECORD OF SUPPORT FOR GOL ON OTHER SIMILAR MATTERS (E.G. IMCO) WERE BETTER, EMBASSY WOULD NOT EVEN HAVE CONSIDERED SENDING THIS MESSAGE. AS BETWEEN THE TWO CASES, EMBASSY BELIEVES GOL ASPIRATIONS TO IMCO COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP BETTER DESERVE USG SUPPORT. IN THAT CASE GOL ARGUMENTS FOR SUPPORT ARE DIRECT AND MERITORIOUS; IN THIS ICJ CASE THERE IS NO APPARENT REASON ON THE MERITS TO SUPPORT ONE CANDIDATE OVER ANY OTHER. WE SIMPLY MUST RECOGNIZE THAT, AS EVIDENCED BY FONMIN DENNIS'S JULY FOURTH REMARKS, A ROUGH NOTE HAS CREPT INTO OUR RELATIONS WITH GOL. WE SHOULD NOW BE ESPECIALLY ALERT TO POSSIBILITIES WHERE AT LITTLE COST WE CAN DO SOMETHING TO KEEP THINGS SMOOTH.

3. FULL BIOGRAPHIC INFO ON SUBJECT AVAILABLE IN BIOGRAPHIC HANDBOOK. OF ADDITIONAL INTEREST IS FACT THAT WEEKS REPRESENTED LIBERIA BEFORE ICJ IN 1960 MARITIME CASE.
DECONTROL JULY 11, 1978.
MANFULL

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